

Essential Belief Statement

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EDU 262

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January 28, 2010

“Throughout my years of school, I have been given the privilege to surround myself with some of the best people I will ever meet. They are the people who have taught me about love, life, and happiness. Who have stood by my side and supported me the second I needed a helping hand. They are the people who did not judge me from the outside, but took the time to learn about me and accept me for who I really am. They have made me who I am today and I owe them my most sincere gratitude. To my teachers, thank you. Thank you for giving me more than a foundation for my success, but for also building a dream. Thank you for helping me to find my passion, teaching” (Hollingsworth).

Realizing that education was my dream career was an easy decision to make. I remember the first time I said that I wanted to be a teacher and meant it, instead of providing a mere answer to the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” I was in my sixth grade art class and my teacher’s name was Mrs. Devore. At that point in time I wanted nothing more than to be *just like* Mrs. Devore. Actually, I would have been more satisfied to literally *be* her, instead of a scrawny, 11-year-old girl who felt wise beyond her years. Looking back, I was not all that wise. I may have been more mature than my 11-year-old counterparts, but in the grand scheme of things, I was a typical middle school student. I hated the “in between” feeling of not quite being an adult. I hated the social status ladder and the drama that allowed you to move from rung to rung. I hated my parents who grounded me for the most trivial mishaps. I hated school and most of the teachers that came with it. Overall, I hated life.

Luckily, there were enough teachers that I did *not* hate, that helped me realize that I wanted to give other students better experiences as I had as a student. However, knowing what and whom I wanted to teach was another story, a story that is still unfolding. Growing up interested in the arts, I never really thought about doing anything other than art. After all, I had

talent, enjoyed participating, and yet realistically knew that I would never be a famous artist. Knowing that artistic talent and ability usually has been developed tremendously by the time a student reaches high school, I had an idea that I wanted to teach high school art students. This idea changed my first semester of college when I changed my field of study from art to math. Similarly, I am unsure whether I would like to teach middle school or high school; the jury is still out.

Perhaps I want to teach middle school because most I absolutely hated every minute of it and in some way I hope that I could make a difference in someone else's life enough so that they would not dread school the way I dreaded it. Regardless of what grade level I teach, one of my major goals, as a future educator, is that I can serve my students better than my teachers served me. Yet, one of my greatest fears is falling short of this goal. Sometimes I wonder if I set my expectations too high, but when I think about my educational journey, I cannot help but remember all of the teachers that define the teacher I do not want to be. The teachers that I strove to prove wrong; ones who told me that I could not take a class because I was not "smart enough for honors classes" or that the college I chose was really just a "waste of my brain". That said, I must admit, most of the teachers who I feel failed me are many of my middle school teachers. My greatest fear is being *that* middle school teacher.